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Bret Roessler has already made his mark at Carmel Catholic High School.

The track team captain was also involved in Ambassador's Club and National Honor Society, and served as the second vice president on student council's senior board. Now, with graduation behind him, Roessler sets his sights on higher goals.

"Ever since 9/11, I actually wanted to perform some military service," said Roessler. "Both my grandfathers served in the armed forces and so did my father, so the military is kind of tied into my family.

"At first I was looking into an ROTC scholarship at colleges until a former Carmel student, who currently is attending West Point came into my U.S. History class junior year to talk about the school. After hearing her speak of what the school was like, and the rewards of having a West Point education, I was hooked."

From there, Roessler did his research. He read up on the school, the admission requirements, and even went on a campus tour last spring.

"I wanted to have the West Point experience, get an outstanding education, and serve my country," said Roessler. "After the visit I knew for a fact that this was going to be my first choice, and that I was going to work my butt off if I wanted to go there."

With this goal in mind, Roessler, like millions of other high school juniors across the country, filled out his application, requested his transcripts, and waited by the mailbox. Yet unlike millions of other high school juniors, Roessler did not simply receive a "thick envelope" to notify him of his acceptance. Instead, he got a very special phone call.

"[It's] kind of funny [how] I found out when I got in," recalled Roessler. "Congressman Mark Kirk had called me the night prior to the day I found out, and I just happened to be out that night, so

he left his number on my answering machine. The next day I called him and his first words were 'Congratulations.' I asked specifically what he was congratulating me for, but I kind of knew in my mind what it was about.

In the next few moments, Roessler's life would change forever.

"(Kirk) said "You got in." As soon as I heard those words I just started to sob uncontrollably," said Roessler. "It was the happiest moment of my life. He then began to tell me about what an honor it was that I had made it in, and all I could get out was tell him how honored I was for the appointment.

"I had put so much time and effort into this and it had finally paid off," he added. "I couldn't help but cry. I told Congressman Kirk I wouldn't let him down, and immediately after I called my parents to tell them the exciting news. Both of them couldn't have been happier to see me achieve my goal."

Kiki Schmitz graduated from Carmel Catholic High School Sunday.